(d) Market promotion measures abroad and product development efforts to make Indian gem and jewellery products competitive in world markets have helped in increasing exports and these measures are proposed to be continued and intensified, wherever required.

Irregular Foreign Exchange Transactions by Foreign Missionaries

4905. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any foreign missionaries have been apprehended during the current year for their involvement in irregular foreign exchange transactions; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Trade and Economic Cooperation with ASEAN

4906 SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is working in close co-operation with Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia Pacific Run trade blocks for improving its trading and economic co-operation with these countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (c). The Government has expressed interest in becoming a sectoral dialogue partner with ASEAN in four fields viz. trade, tourism human resource development and science and technology.

Government has also flagged its interest in having association with the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Grouping.

Financial Assistance to Bihar

4907. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to given more financial assistance to Bihar to enable it to overcome its difficult economic situation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE): (a) to (c). Usual flow of funds on account of share in Central Taxes, Central assistance for State Plan schemes, Small Savings loan, Revenue Deficit grant, Centre's contribution to State Calamity Relief Fund and Centrally sponsored schemes is being made to the State. Whenever necessary, some advance releases of State's entitlements will also be made to help the State tide over their temporary Ways and Means difficulties. No other type of assistance is proposed to be given to the State during the current financial years.

Alleged Fraud in UCO Bank, Chandigarh

4908. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned 'Crores missing from bank' appearing in the Tribune dated September 26, 1991.

(b) whether any inquiries and investigations have been conducted into the affairs of this bank;

(c) if so, the extent and number of frauds and embezzlement cases detected;

(d) whether any responsibility has been fixed therefor; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and further action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e). UCO Bank has reported that 14 cases of fraudulent payments using forged demand drafts totalling Rs. 21,86,809.30 and one case of withdrawal against wrong debit involving Rs. 45,000/- only were detected in March 1990 at its Sector 17–B Branch, Chandigarh. The Bank has further reported that in connection with these payments, the Central Bureau of Investigation registered a regular case on 28.11.90 against 3 Bank employees and 6 outsiders. UCO Bank has placed 4 employees under suspension.

Revival of State Legislative Council, Tamil Nadu

4909. SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA:
DR. A.K. PATEL:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly has passed a resolution on October 4, 1991 rescinding an earlier resolution suggesting the revival of the State Legislative Council; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Legislative Council Bill, 1990 for the creation of Legislative Councils in the States of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu was passed in the Rajya Sabha on 28th May, 1990 and was transmitted to Lok Sabha. The Bill lapsed with the dissolution of the Ninth Lok Sabha. In view of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly's Resolution rescinding its earlier resolution for revival of the State Legislative Council, no action is required on the part of the Central Government.

Visit of Delegation of Confederation of Engineering Industry to USA

4910. SHRI SRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation of the confederation of Engineering Industry visited the USA recently;

(b) if so, the details of discussions held and the outcome thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) Yes, Sir.